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WITHDRAWN

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To my dear Mamma
May your kind memories
dwell on longer than the rest

P. L. St
June 1 1912



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SINGING RIVERS



IN THE YORKSHIRE DALES

From a drawing by Lyons Wilson

SINGING RIVERS

BY DOROTHY UNA RATCLIFFE

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TO
C. F. R.

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D. U. R.

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SINGING RIVERS

PROLOGUE

SINGING RIVERS

UP on the Mountains-of-the-Beginning-of-Time sits the first and the last great Lord. Some men see him from the North, others from the South, and these different view-points have led them to believe that there are two great Lords ; but the rivers of the world, which He holds by shining silver leashes, know that it is the hand of the first and last and only great Lord that is the source of their power and of their beauty.

Many eons ago, when all the rivers of the world lay in the cupped palm of His hand, He spoke thus to them, and they glistened brightly, hearing His river-sweet voice :

“ For long ye have dreamed in the twilit cave of my Hand ; but the time has come for you to part, and do the work which lies before you ; yet, before I loose your leashes, tell me, each one of you, what your heart’s desire may be, so that I may grant each one his wish.”

PROLOGUE

Then the St. Lawrence spoke :

“Grant me, O Lord, great lakes along my course, so that when my waters reach them I can dream that I still lie in the great palm of Thy hand.”

God granted the wish, and slipped his shining leash.

“Give me vast waters,” said the Yang-tse-Kiang,

“Veil my beginning in mystery and my end in sunlight,” sighed the Nile.

When the great rivers Zambesi, Euphrates, Ganges and Amazon had spoken, the Lorelei voice of the Rhine was heard :

“I would call to many peoples and enchant and bewitch them all.”

“Thy wish will bring unhappiness, for men will fight and die to possess thee, O Lorelei,” and He sighed as He slipped the Rhine between the knuckles of His fingers, and she was as beautiful to behold as a heavenly river.

Then a younger voice spoke :

“Grant that men build on my banks a wonderful city, that I may cherish it ere I pass on my way to the Sea.”

“That is a great wish for a small river, Silver Thames, yet I grant it, and as the ages go, thy

PROLOGUE

city shall become the greatest Metropolis of the World, and one day men shall take great pride in its beauty, and then it shall also become the fairest."

When nearly all the rivers had gone, the Lord—who was getting sleepy by this time—heard the lilting of the Aire, the Wharfe, the Nidd, the Ure and the Swale.

"To all Thine other rivers Thou hast granted great things; to the Nile, its mystery; to the Yang-tse-Kiang, its power; to the Zambesi, its beautiful falls; to the St Lawrence, its great lakes; to the Volga, its loneliness; to the Rhine, an immortal lure; to the Thames, a great city. We have spoken together, and we all pray for the same gift. Grant that we become singing rivers, so that we may fill the hearts of birds and of men with song. Grant, O great Lord, that as we leave Thine hand we become rivers of Song."

The great Lord smiled tenderly at their united request, and loosening their silver leashes, said:

"Yea, ye shall be singing rivers, and because your wish was united ye shall for a while each sing his own song, then join your voices before you reach the sea."

PROLOGUE

And the place where the singing rivers unite, men
call the Ouse.

And some men have it that, when the great Lord
is very weary, **H**e comes at sunset hour to be lulled
to rest by the crooning of **H**is little singing rivers.

PUCK IN THE DALES

HARK Forrard ! O Hounds of Morning, Puck's in
the Dales at play !

Follow him ! Silver Mist, follow him ! Over the
hills and away !

Follow him ! Warm Rain, follow him ! Startle his
playmate star

Into the arms of yesterday. Forrard ! Thro'
Faerieland Bar.

Maid of the Rainbow, follow him ! On in the track
of his fun,

Down from the moor to the meadow, up from the
earth to the sun.

Follow him ! South Wind, follow him ! Ripple like
laughter along

The rounded heathery hilltops. Follow the trail of
his song !

.
Has anyone had the wonderful luck

By the banks of Aire to see young Puck ?

“ By Malham Tarn

A heron's flown,

PUCK IN THE DALES

Between his wings
Was a bairn, unknown.
He lightly held
A buckler fern,
And sang a lilt
As young as the burn.
Sleepy sedges
Fringing the lake
Hearing his song
Swayed wide awake.
He chivvied an ousel
Among the bents,
And drove cloud-lambs
Into tree-green tents.
Then he cascaded
Gordale Scar,
O'er slippery ledge
And mossy bar.
Round Skipton Castle
All last night
The bats tried hard
To catch the sprite ! ”

*Can anyone say if Puck was seen
Where Wharfe's a grey ribbon between the
green ?*

PUCK IN THE DALES

“ I saw him chase
 In the wind at will
The tiny shadows
 Up Barden Hill,
Up from the river
 In misty flocks
By fern and ling
 To the moor that rocks.¹
Folk say they heard
 Him play with a stick
On the bluebells growing
 By Appletreewick.
At Kettlewell he
 Was tickling trout
Till they twirled and twirled
 Like a roundabout.
And ² lile Ruth Lister
 Heard him trill,
‘ Follow me, Follow,
 Up Halton Gill.’ ”

*Can anyone say if Puck was hid
Under the alders of peaty Nidd ?*

¹ Rocking Moor above Bolton Abbey.

² Lile=little.

PUCK IN THE DALES

“ At Brimham Rocks

He last was seen,

Clad in a jerkin

Of bilberry green,

Calling ‘ Coo-ee ’

To a stunted thorn

Till Echo answered

With elfin horn.

Some folk have it

On Sigsworth Moor

He chained a butterfly

To the door

Of deaf Ned Harker.

Wath wives say

Their soap was stolen

Washing day,

And found on top

Of a moorland cairn ;

‘ Drat that thieving

Pixy bairn ! ’ ”

Who was it said that he was sure

Young Puck was seen by the woods of Ure ?

“ He can’t be far,

For my lile daughter

PUCK IN THE DALES

Saw him diving
 In Semmerwater.
His heron alighted
 To take a drink
Just where childer
 Played by the brink.
Then he started
 A water-hen race
Till the water looked
 Like grandmother's lace.
A Middleham woman
 Heard him call
And saw him perched
 On the castle wall,
Pouring dew from
 A foxglove jug
And supping it out
 Of a harebell mug."

*By the banks of Swale has anyone heard
That roguish Puck with the trill of a bird?*

"From Reeth to Richmond
 A rainbow arch
Hangs o'er the river,
 The willows, the larch,

PUCK IN THE DALES

And Marrick men say
That, sliding along
The rosy side,
Was an elf of song,
Calling the knights ¹
To awake from sleep,
Who for centuries dream
In a Northland keep.
At Easby Abbey
A cobbler found
A thistledown shoe
On the sacred ground."

Hark Forrard ! O Hounds of Twilight ! Where ?
Oh where can he be ?
Has he escaped to Derwent Vale, or by Eskdale
down to the sea ?
Happen he's over the Hambleton Hills, teasing the
old White Horse,
Or spraying the flowers with sparkling gems gathered
from Hardraw Force !
Lasses of Amerdale heard him ; the goose-girl on
Almias Scar
Saw him jump from the gloaming, wick as a shooting
star.

¹ There is a North Country legend that King Arthur and his
Knights sleep in a great chamber under Richmond Castle.

PUCK IN THE DALES

By the light of the yellow moon in the dew-drenched
purple grass

He was seen to skip and tumble over the Buttertubs
Pass.

Tally Ho ! He's telling at Brignall a tale of Oberon's
reign—

When everyone ruled a fief in the dales, or owned a
castle in Spain.

Boy, with the charm of a swallow, the soul and the
song of a lark,

Nest on my heart for a minute, in the lonely listening
dark !

PUCK (*sings*) :

*“ In vain you may chase
All over the place
To catch little me
By burnie and lea.
Only my shadow
Will lightly fall
Over the mortals
That I enthrall.
Still will I fly
If foot come near ;
Lightheart, love me,
And I am here,
Every moment of every year.”*

PENNYPOT¹ LANE RACE

TITANIA owned a cream-white mare
(Swift as wind, as a sunbeam fair)
To race against the jet black horse
Of Oberon on the gorse-gold course.
The race was held at the end of June
Beneath the light of the umpire moon.

Titania fondled the cream-white mare,
(Swift as wind, as a sunbeam fair)

“ *Win ! sweet mare, and for ever and ever
The oats of Faerie shall fail you never,
Your saddle shall be of heart’s-ease blue,
Your bridle the gossamer linked with dew.
Win ! sweet mare !* ”

With her lips to its nose
She pinned on her colours of wild dog rose.

The betting was strong on Oberon’s horse,
Fay bookies said that he’d stay the course.

¹ The Roman Road above Harrogate.

PENNYPOT LANE RACE

“ It’s five to one on Oberon’s Black,
Put on the wings from your elfin back !
Oberon’s horse is ridden by Puck,
Bold as a bumble bee, light as Luck ! ”

It was neck and neck for a mile and a half,
(Puck the jockey forgot to laugh)
On they came over moss-studded rock,
Midnight chimed from a dandelion clock.
On they came over furze and ling,
By Shakespeare’s pen ! it’s the nearest thing !
Titania’s White and Oberon’s Black
Neck and neck o’er the Pennypot track.
Just as they reached the pine-tree post
(The Black was doing his uttermost)
The White heard the voice of Titania say,
In a whisper as far as a star’s away,
 “ *Win ! sweet mare, and for ever and ever*
 The oats of Faerie shall fail you never. ”
The White spurted on and won by a head :
(Who dare recount what Oberon said !
But pixy reporters say he swore
Jockey Puck should wear his colours no more.)

PUCK BY THE SEA

Sun be blithe !

Wind be sweet !

Day be long !

Night be fleet !

For Puck has found a little toy ship
Whose white sails over a sea-pool dip,
She carries for cargo a squirming dab,
A shrimp and a wriggling baby crab.
A sky-blue pennon she merrily waves
To hobs ¹ that lurk in the whispering caves.

Sea be smooth !

Stars be bright !

Dawn be swift

And bring daylight !

For Puck has found a bucket and spade,
And lured from her mother a wee mermaid.
In Pirates' Bay they joyfully dig
A fort for Oberon, gold and big.
They sleep till cock-light, curled in a shell,
While a sea-buoy sings to them, ' Ding, Dong, Dell.'

¹ Yorkshire brownies.

BALLAD OF THE MER-BABY

A MER-BABE sat on a shining rock
Swishing his tiny tail ;
His face was haloed in sea-spray curls,
As foam his body was frail.

He dipped and swayed to the rise and fall
Of the music of the wave,
And laughed when a sea-horse sought to push
Him into a whisp'ring cave.

As the moon swam out, his round green eyes
Held a look of deepening fright,
For he heard bells toll, toll out in the bay
In the silent coming of night.

And slithering down from his shining rock,
He swam to the amethyst hall,
Where his mother sat stitching with needle of froth
A mortal's caul.

BALLAD OF THE MER-BABY

“ Mother ! O, Mother ! there’s tolling strange
That pulls at my very heart-strings !
Mother, O, Mother, the moon’s lost,
No longer her night-light swings.”

“ Sweet foolish child, it’s a Rover sprite
That mourns by a sunken prow :
Rest, mine elfin, close thine eyes :
Sea-babes slumber now.”

He closed his eyes, but the tolling bells
Still rang in his curly head ;
Always he heard the booming of them
When he lay in his onyx bed.

His mother grieved for a day and a year,
And then she did espy
A swimmer breasting the green-shot waves,
Who greeted her with a cry,

“ Why grieve you, Queen of the sea-blue eyes,
And why do you quietly weep ? ”
“ Mortal ! know I’ve a Mer-boy who
Hears tolling bells in his sleep.”

BALLAD OF THE MER-BABY

And the swimmer laughed, "What need to grieve?

Those bells, I hear them too :

O ! once a Minster of God reigned here,¹

And the bells rang clear and true.

"And the waves have jostled the tower away,

And the altar and aisles have gone,

But the deep-toned bells for the love of God

Under the waves ring on.

"Your babe will be a Bard of the Sea :

O ! mourn no more for him,

But send him to me by the silver shore

Where the sea-weed leaves a rim."

Then the swimmer and Mer-boy made for the shore,

And, wandering hand in hand,

Together they made the sweetest sea-songs

Ever heard on the land.

And thro' each song could be heard the toll

Of a bell that called to each soul,

Merged with the magical, musical rhyme

Of the ocean's roll.

¹ All along the low coast of Holderness there are many stories of lost villages and churches.

THE EYES OF HERSELF

TO ROSEMARY

“ SCURRY down,
Berry-brown
Elfins all !

Come on the back of the curbless squall,
Wing on the echo of Oberon's call,

Over the burn,
Where the drowsy hern ¹

Nods 'mid the rushes and the fern.
Leave your play with a cowslip ball,
Oberon sings his gathering song !

Scurry down,
Berry-brown
Elfins all !

Come by pools where night moths stray,
Where rainbow trout with their shadows play ;

Where the pop-in-jay
Calls from the wood to the Milky Way ;
Up at the Hall with the twinkling lights

¹ Hern = the heron (*Ardea cinerea*).

THE EYES OF HERSELF

A bairn is born this night of nights.

Scurry down,

Berry-brown

Elfins all !

Wing on the echo of Oberon's call :

Before cock-crow we all must say

Whether her eyes shall be brown or grey ;

Hurry now,

Scurry now,

Gather from pines the hazel-brown,

Take from the holly its shining green,

Bring from the valley the dusky crown

Of Night, when she rules the gossiping dene."

Titania came, and she stamped her foot,

Her anger aroused a sleepy coot,

And a frightened owlet awoke to hoot.

" In the last bairn's eyes you dropped beech-mast,

And ivy-dust in the one 'fore the last ;

This new-born girl, by my butterflies !

Shall have speedwell-violet-hyacinth eyes.

Up the vale,

Up the vale,

Gather me blue !

THE EYES OF HERSELF

Harness the faerie horses of dew ;
Search the woods where the ring doves coo,
Search the haunts of the tramp cuckoo :

Hallo ! Halloo !

Find the heart of the periwinkle,
Bid the speedwell to lend a twinkle,

Up the vale,

Up the vale,

Gather me blue !

And when the nurses are fast asleep,
When a star is teaching the babe bo-peep,
Up to the cradle, fairies, creep,
Drop the hyacinth dust and dew
Into her eyes : they *shall* be blue !

Up the vale,

Up the vale,

Gather me blue !

All the children around I know
Have eyes as black as the hardy sloe,
So Oberon King I here insist
These eyes shall be Titania-kissed ! ”

That is the reason the eyes of Herself
Are blue as the azure wings of an elf.

THE ELFIN-BRIDE

WHAT will you have from Teviot side
As a gift from your lover, my bonnie, fay bride ?
“ *A silver robe from the Daisy-ride.*”

What will you have from Ettrick dale,
My bonnie-bel bride, so faerie frail ?
“ *A harp that is strung with the birches' veil.*”

What will you have from Yarrow's dene,
My ferlie-bride, as proud as a queen ?
“ *For my sleek black hair the broom's gold skein.*”

What will you have from Tweed's flower-brae,
My elfin-bride, who will rest but a day ?
“ *For my throat a rope of its crystal spray.*”

And what shall I bring you from Edina toon,
Bride of my heart, and bride of my June ?
“ *Buckles from Arthur's Seat for my shoon.*”

TWILIGHT

THE gentle Twilight Lady
Is coming. Let her pass.
She scatters from her basket
The dewdrops on the grass.
She closes up the lilies,
She sends the bees to bed,
And throws a veil of silver
Upon the rowan's red.
And thro' the drowsy forest
She bids the birds be still,
And listens, turns, and listens
Unto the wakeful rill.
Then those who love the moortops,
And to the hills belong,
May hear adown the valley
The Twilight Lady's song,
Calling in lonely music,
That breaks the heart o' th' wild,
For Night, her star-eyed lover,
To bring back Peace—their child.

ROAMING

SOMETIMES I long intensely to roam and roam and
roam,

Altho' I know that most I love the heathery hills
of Home ;

And yet—before love of wandering is quenched by
need for rest—

I want to see those other lands that other men loved
best !

See Li Po's willow country of oriole-haunted hours,
The Himalayan gorges with rhododendron flowers,
To see the rose-wreathed fountains where Hafiz mused
and wrote,

To sail by Viking islands in a red-sailed fisher-boat,

To see Sicilian April when Proserpina passes,
Scattering anemones among the quiet grasses,
See the lily-town of Dante, Don Quixote's plain of
mills ;

The Centaur's windy valleys, the hot Samoan hills.

ROAMING

See Provence in the May-tide with Mistral as a
guide;

The wild wood of Broceliande, where lonely Merlin
died;

A western redwood forest, where small trains go and
come,

And Japan in all her witchery of cherry flower and
plum.

And many other places I would see before I'm old,
For many a vale is beautiful and fair is many a wold,
Yet wherever my feet may wander, my heart will
never roam,

Far from the heathery, misty, wonderful hills of
Home.

MOOR SONG

VOICE of the moor ! you are crooning
A lilt of the heathery hills,
A burden of storm-stressed larches,
A murmur of singing rills ;
A song that is learned by each tiny pool
From the passing-by of the old wind fool.

Voice of the moor ! You are crooning
Of bogs where the cotton-bent blows ;
Of ditches where tasselly grasses
Bow to the merry wild rose ;
Of gorse that for sun-golden miles is seen,
And broom where the blossom buries the green.

Where a laverock comradely carols,
“ Dawn ! and another day's nigh ! ”
Where grouse call “ Come back ” in the twilight,
And hullets plaintively cry ;
When the foxglove steeples are belled with dew
And trees nod good night in the darkening blue.

MOOR SONG

Voice of the moor ! You are crooning
Of peat-fragrant cottage hearths,
Of limestone walls whence the plum flowers
Rain over sheltered garths,
Of gardens where love-in-a-mist is,
Carnations and lad's love and lilies.

Envassaling voice of the moorland,
The heart of me cries to be one
With your spaces, your storms, and your beauty,
In rain, and in wind, and in sun.
Your crooning will call to my heart, till breath
Is taken away by the Angel of Death.

A DALESMAN DIED

ON the edge of gloaming a dalesman died,
No kin of mine, and yet I cried,

(The river goes on singing).

His wife is old and bent and grey,
She will live alone by Greenhow way.

(The funeral bell is ringing).

Down in the village the old wives sigh,
“ Better it were that both should die.”

(The carts go down-hill groaning).

For fifty years they were man and wife,
Not twain, they two, but a single life.

(The wind goes down-dale moaning).

SONG OF DUSK

DUSK is on the moorland, and his azure wings
Have rested on the heads of little singing things ;
Dusk is on the moorland, waiting for his bride,
And over hill and hummock I am hasting to his side ;
O ! he will greet me lovingly ; the dew is like his kiss,
And slowly pull around me the starry tapestries.

All night long the pines will chant a wistful lullaby,
All night long the leal ling will gently sway and sigh,
All night long the beck will call among the bracken
 hushes,
And a little wind will play his lute among the
 rushes,
Dusk is on the moorland, I upon his breast
Lean, his kisses on mine eyes, at rest—at rest.

APRIL MORNING AT T'EAGLE

THE birds are in full song,

Its long since they were sleeping,
And down the stretch of lawn

The daisy-babes are peeping :
Beeches beyond the gateway

Are inlaid on the sky,
There comes from updale Sigsworth

A cuckoo's ecstasy :

The cherubs spilling windflowers

From five o'clock to seven—

Have made the swards of t'Eagle

Fair as the lawns of Heaven.

APRIL TWILIGHT AT T'EAGLE

THE laurel flower is sweet at dusk ;
And fragrant is the water-musk ;
The paths go wandering at will
Up the little rivered ghyll.
A rhododendron lamp is seen
Glowing among the twilit green.
A last bird calls ; the pool gleams ;
The trees elusive are as dreams.
The pallid cowslips are asleep,
The Shepherd Star shines out to keep
Watch o'er the woodlands, and the Lord
Closes the windflowers on the sward.

THE EAST RIDING

WHERE shall you find old earth of bonnier mien
Than where the ploughlands sweep toward the sea ?
Where seagulls wing in ancient liberty
O'er fields of produce, ample and serene :
High on the wold is many a sturdy screen
Of nursing pines that, with concerted plea
Curb the wind's strength before it finds the lea,
A land of low-kept hedges, sane and clean.
Here at your feet range rhythmic lines of rye
And serried ranks of waving, waving corn,
There's clover pushing up to find the sky,
Joyful, because thro' toil it has been born ;
God loaned the ploughlands to the first of men,
But every year we yield them back agen.

DAWN

DAWN is a golden gypsy

Singing " Who'll buy, who'll buy ? "

To dreaming rivers and sleepy trees

As her caravan moves thro' the sky.

She has many a basket of amber

Woven with willows of light,

Laden with glittering topaz

And emeralds stol'n from the Night.

Carpets of rose and purple

Made on the cloud's own loom,

Anklets and ear-rings of Jasper

Brought from the Twilight's tomb ;

Scarves from the wind's swift fingers

On her caravan steps are unfurled,

And singing, " Who'll buy ? " she passes on,

To the other side of the world.

TO AN OAK SAPLING

To-DAY you only reach my chin,
Your little brown arms are lank and thin,
I can count your leaves they are so few,
I can kiss your crown when I bid you adieu.
Yet after our last adieu is said,
And I come no more, your lofty head
Will look away down to the dip in the hills,
To dales of daisies and daffodils ;
Then a younger singer at even-tide,
In your leafy darkness will take a pride—
Yet—remember the singer who loved you when
You were tiny as are the children of men.

THE SYCAMORE

(To E. A. B.)

THE beech is beauty, the birch is grace,
And the oak is old and royal,
But the sycamore has a sturdy trait,
For the sycamore tree is loyal.

Wherever a daleland heart's at home
A sycamore's arms are spreading,
Over the garth, the fold and the byres,
Friend to the grey stone standing.

Vivid in Spring, in Summer superb,
A golden mate in November :
Ho ! a sycamore tree in the Dale Countree
Is a joy to love and remember.

ECHO

ECHO ! you are calling
From the upland fields and fells ;

I am falling
Down a ladder of dale-bells.

ECHO ! you are crying
Where the dowly peewits keen ;

I am sighing
Round the rigs of new-mown green.

ECHO ! you are peeping
Thro' the slender-green of birk ;

I am leaping
Where the moorland thorn-trees lurk.

ECHO ! you are hiding
With the hobs ¹ in Troller's ghyll ;

¹ Yorkshire brownies.

ECHO

I am riding

The White Doe on Rylstone Hill.

Echo ! you are whistling

To the cuckoo's cuck—cuck—coo ;

I am list'ning

For the Summer's last " hulloo " !

THE SEA-FOOL

“ LORD of the Lonesome Places !

Crazy am I to-night

To be where the roller-races

Are held in the live moonlight.

To listen the chant of the ocean-runes,

To watch the swift tide sucking the dunes.

Incoming moan,

Tangle of foam,

Moon-sheeted sands,

Sea-weeded strands !

Nothing may keep me indoors, for the sea

And the moon are pulling the heart out of me.

If the door does not give,

Lord of the Lonesome Places,

Thy poor sea-fool cannot live

For long from the foam-fair faces.

I, the ocean's own dear fool,

To be caught and caged, to eat by rule,

When the breakers roar, and the night is cool,

And the sea is sparkly and beautiful !

THE SEA-FOOL

One more blow ! incoming tide !
Shatter the door ! The dunes are wide ! ”

*“ When the moon is full he’s always wild,
Pity he did not die when a child.”*

“ Die ? Hands off ! O whips of foam !
Listen the hurricane’s fifty-knot moan !
Lord of the Lonesome Places ! I
Am not afraid on the shore to die,
But caught in a trap, like a mouse in a hole,
To die in the dark like an injured mole !—
Lord of the Lonesome ! set me free
To spill my crazy life by the sea.”

HOME
(THE DALES)

HOME is a country of heathered hills,
Of lichened walls, and of old grey byres,
And never a mile there is, but the rills
Carol the lilt of the heart's desires.

The folk and the seasons come and go,
Yet never without new beauty born,
Each year awakes with the flowers of the sloe,
And each year sleeps when sleeps the thorn.

Home is a country of flowers and ferns,
Roads that beckon and leisurely roam,
Sparkling, carolling, lonely burns,
Peaceful pastures ; these are Home.

SILVIO AND DAMARIS

A PASTORAL

SPRING

SCENE.—*Somewhere in the Yorkshire dales. A river fringed with alders and birch ; at a little distance a stone-tiled house nestles sheltered by fells. The air is gay with the fluting of blackbirds. SILVIO is singing a merry song and during the little pauses between the verses plays “ducks and drakes,” making the flat pebbles hop nine, and sometimes ten times across the peat-brown river. DAMARIS is watching him and trying to make a cowslip ball at the same time.*

SILVIO (*sings*) :

In a little white house
Among the fells,
'Mid lilies and lilac
My true love dwells.

In a little white room
My true love sleeps,

SILVIO AND DAMARIS

And the wilful ivy
Sentry keeps.

On to dream-moors
Her white feet wander
In search of a Love Star
Shining beyond her.

In a little white house
Among the fells,
'Mid lilies and lilac
My true love dwells.

*With a laugh he sends the last stone skimming
across the waters, then throws himself down
at DAMARIS' feet, singing :*

One day she'll find
In eyes love-lit,
The golden lover
She would outwit.

DAMARIS (*smiling*) :

Would it be wise
To trust the mocking stars in your dark eyes ?
Oh ! men can look so candid and sincere
When most deceitful !

SILVIO AND DAMARIS

SILVIO :

By yon thrush, I swear
My eyes are truthful ! All I say of you
Is truest truth, is speedwell-true ;
And if some mischief-maker says of me
That my poor songs are full of flattery,
Believe him not ; believe your own dear heart
Which, every pulsing moment, pleads my part.

DAMARIS (*doubtingly*) :

Yestreen I took a book to Woodcock Ghyll,
And watched the sun wink over Heron hill ;
With slanting rosy rays he beautified
The singing waters and the countryside.
I watched a grey moth leave a milk-white nettle,
And on the white page of the volume settle.
As I forgot to turn the pages over
His delicate-veined wings this line did cover,
“ *Men were deceivers ever,*” written large,
Surrounded by a rose-engravéd marge.

SILVIO (*laughing*) :

O ! Sweetheart mine, you must have read it
wrong.
Deceivers ? Surely that's not in the song.
“ Men ever were deceived,” the line should run,
(And have been since the advent of year one !)

SILVIO AND DAMARIS

DAMARIS :

My poet understood men's motives well.

SILVIO (*convincingly*) :

No Poet, Sweet, can all men's motives tell.

Supposing I should search some folio

In quest of sayings (there are some, I know)

Against the constancy of womenkind,

How many, think you, speedily I'd find ?

Oh ! long ago in France, there reigned a king ¹

Whose fame made mediæval Europe ring :

He was a ruler just, a scholar wise,

And oft had searched for love in women's eyes.

He wrote of women, lines as true as yours,

From knowledge won in passion's red-lipped
wars :

" O ! men beware ! for women can deceive—

Trust them but once, you will deserve to
grieve ! " ²

See on this subject how men disagree ;

They cannot be safe guides for you and me.

Sweet ! I will teach you that men can be true,

And women's constancy shall mirrored be in
you.

¹ Francis I.

² " Souvent femme varie,
Bien fol qui s'y fie."

SILVIO AND DAMARIS

DAMARIS *is silenced, and SILVIO sings merrily :*

“ In a little white house
Among the fells,
'Mid lilies and lilac
My true love dwells.”

SUMMER

DAMARIS *is walking slowly along the path that skirts
the Lake of the Beeches. She is knitting.*

DAMARIS :

If Silvio loved me not, I should not care
If day were dark, or night were noon-day fair,
If linnets piped their lyrics to the moon,
If doddering leaves foretold sweet leafy June.
All things might then reverse Dame Nature's plan,
For what were life without the love of Man ?
And Man is Silvio. (Sighs.)

Would that I could borrow
Half of his joys, and keep all of his sorrow.

*A musical whistle is heard from the other side
of the water, and in a few minutes SILVIO
appears.*

SILVIO (*approaching*) :

It's Damaris I vow—and knitting too—

(*Mimicking her.*)

Plain twice, purl thrice, then plain right thro',

SILVIO AND DAMARIS

Come, put it by, and race me through the glade
Where the sun chequers all the leafy shade.
We'll make the rabbits scamper to their holes,
And scare the squirrels up the ivied boles,
Our goal shall be the lovers' Wishing Well
From where we see the Lion-crouching fell,
And a long line of scarlet rowan trees,
Stretching away to pleasant sheep-owned leas :
A kiss shall be the guerdon of the race.

DAMARIS :

It does not please me, Sir, to leave this place,
I like it ; Peace and I were tenants here,
Forgetful that the world held haunting Fear.
The water-hen made golden tracks upon
The surface of a pool warmed by the Sun ;
But since your coming all the birds have fled—
“ Man is a hunter,” warningly they said ;
And so they fear you.

O ! this line is wrong !

SILVIO (*cajolingly*) :

Sweet, when you knit the time seems very long.

*He steals quietly behind her and, snatching at
the knitting, runs off gleefully down the
glade. After one moment of surprise
DAMARIS follows and catches him as he
lies beside the Wishing Well.*

SILVIO AND DAMARIS

DAMARIS (*scornfully*) :

A runner, you ! O ! Silvio, your speed
Is in your tongue.

SILVIO (*humbly*) :

'Twas yonder weed
Tripped me, before I fairly got away—
(*Irrelevantly.*)

Darling, I love you more from day to day.
(*Placing his finger in the trickling stream which
falls from the Wishing Well.*)

Wish for my pleasure when you place your fingers
Where the spring like a chain of crystal lingers.
You know I love you,
Dam'ris, Sweetheart rare.

DAMARIS (*holding out her hands*) :

Give me my knitting. O ! the world is fair !
A kiss ? Just one, but do not ask another—
I told you once I loved you as a brother.

SILVIO (*impetuously catching her in his arms*) :

And I—I love you more than all the earth :
You are a spirit born of April's mirth,
And when I fold you tightly in my arms
I hold the loveliest She in all this land of farms.

SILVIO AND DAMARIS

DAMARIS (*struggling only a very little to free herself*) :

But men so often say these pleasing things,
They are but as the rustle of bird wings.

SILVIO (*protesting*) :

Never ! so hear me Woodland ! Hear me, Sky
Has any woman—Nay ! I never lie—
Has any woman been beloved by me
But only Damaris. Now, I decree—

(DAMARIS *slips away and watches him from
behind a large moss-cushioned rock.*)

DAMARIS (*demurely*) :

A man who says he's loved no other maid,
Of such a man, a maid should be afraid.

SILVIO :

Where have you culled your wisdom ? From
some page

Unsuitable for readers of your age !

DAMARIS :

I read it in a quaint, red-leather tome
On Talleyrand, upon the shelves at home.
Of you, dear Sir, the old book says, " Beware ! "
(*Exit, running.*)

SILVIO (*laughing*) :

Wait till I catch you next, my impish Fair !
(*Sighs*) O ! Damaris, you'd make an angel swear !
(*Exit, also running.*)

SILVIO AND DAMARIS

SCENE.—*Dawn in the little topiary garden, fragrant with mignonette and cloves, below DAMARIS' window. SILVIO glances with impatience at his silent companions, an unknown bird, a Noah's Ark dog, a turreted wall and two towers, all of yew, then he sings lustily :*

SILVIO :

O ! would that I
 Could be the Sun,
To light her lips
 With rosy fun.

O ! would that I
 Could be the Wind,
And wantonly
 Her hair unbind.

O ! would that Love
 Could shoot a dart
Into the wildwood
 Of her heart !

DAMARIS opens her window.

SILVIO :

The sky's a bowl of azure, music brimmed,
For all the birds their morning praise have
 hymned.

SILVIO AND DAMARIS

It is unseemly that the world should wake
And sing of loveliness for your dear sake
And you unheeding. Silver-rainbow trout
Are leaping. Lie-a-bed ! come out !

DAMARIS :

Hush ! you will waken Father if you shout ;
This newborn day has scarce its life begun,
No hill-top yet has felt the risen sun.
The birds . . .

SILVIO :

. . . the birds were singing hours ago.

DAMARIS (*merrily*) :

Maybe a hullet hooted or a crow.

SILVIO :

A hullet ! Nay, a blackbird and a lark.

DAMARIS (*laughing*) :

They sing not often when the dale is dark.

'Twas in your heart, that singing, restless boy.

SILVIO :

Perhaps, but they are singing now, sweet Doy,¹
And each one chants, " Ah, lazy Damaris,
She cares not for our dew-born rhapsodies,
She heeds no more her lover Silvio's song.

¹ Dale, diminutive for darling.

SILVIO AND DAMARIS

Wrong, is she wrong
To hide herself from him ? How can she learn
The art of loving, when she does not earn
With tenderness the lessons he would give ? ”

DAMARIS :

But loving ! It's as simple as to live ;
One could not live and love not, in good sooth,
Living and loving are the same sweet truth.

SILVIO (*after some consideration*) :

The theory's right, but knowledge never sought
By self-experience is knowledge still unbought.
Come, little Scholar, let me lessons give
Upon the art to Love, the art to Live.

DAMARIS (*pretending to hear a noise in the house*) :

I think my Mother calls me. (*Whispering*) Go
away,
And maybe I will learn—another day.

[*Exit* SILVIO.]

DAMARIS (*sings*) :

Silvio tells me love is sweet,
And he should know right well,
For many a maid has Silvio wooed,
As many a maid can tell.

SILVIO AND DAMARIS

But if love is, as Silvio says,
So full of douce delight,
How is it sister Phœbe weeps
For Colin every night ?

And why should Colin mope and sigh
When Phœbe laughs and sings ?
Surely this over-rated love
More tears than laughter brings !

AUTUMN

DAMARIS *is leaning over a gate leading to the byre,
and gazing down dale. The river can be seen in
the distance through reddening woodlands. Up
on the moor are patches of scarlet whortle leaves,
and the bracken is russet after the rain.*

DAMARIS :

How brooding is the dale and overcast,
A week has gone since Silvio wrote me last.
There is another post this afternoon,
But memories of men wane like the moon.
Maybe this moment with some girl he dallies
In far-off, greener, happier, sunnier valleys.

SILVIO AND DAMARIS

I wonder why we love such fickle men,
It is a marvel far beyond my ken !
They are too changeable : why should I grieve ?

*SILVIO silently comes up behind her and holds
his hands over her eyes.*

SILVIO (*laughingly*) :
Consult your mischief-loving Mother Eve.

DAMARIS (*startled, but quickly controlling her surprise*) :

What have you heard ?

SILVIO :
Your dainty diatribe
Upon mankind. Alas ! so cruel a gibe
Should fall from lips as sweet as Damaris'.

DAMARIS (*with insouciance*) :
'Twas not of you I spoke, I must confess,
Should I repine if you prefer another ?
Have I not said I love you as a brother,
And if you roam away, why should I grieve ?

SILVIO (*teasingly*) :
Deceiving ever, great grand-daughter Eve !
DAMARIS *leaves him hastily, disdainingly a
reply.*

SILVIO AND DAMARIS

A PLAINT

SILVIO (*sings*) :

Summer's a-waning,

Each falling leaf's a knell,

Each drooping flower

Tolls a farewell.

Birds sing mournful ditties

Through the ferny dell,

Heather bloom's bronzing

On the grape-blue fell.

Lass-lorn am I ! My love has fled, has fled

She and the summer have sped.

Desirèd Damaris !

My sweetheart Damaris !

The harvest moon is falling,

Thro' clouds that race her by,

She scarce can spare a star-wink

To watch the woods die.

When all the earth is failing,

Winter's hand's nigh,

Her lovely cheer has disappeared

With the last lily's sigh.

SILVIO AND DAMARIS

Lass-lorn am I ! My love has fled, has fled,
She and the summer have sped.

Desirèd Damaris !

My sweetheart Damaris !

Winter's soon coming,

His envoys wait without,

Ere long his chilling spirit

Will thro' the garden flout.

Nights be long and weary,

And I'm beset by doubt—

“ How could she love so poor a thing ? ”

The peevish wind moans out.

Lass-lorn am I ! My love has fled, has fled,

She with the summer sun has sped.

Desirèd Damaris !

My sweetheart Damaris !

WINTER

SCENE.—*A road leading to the moor between larchen and pine woods. The raven-dark wings of the pines are drooping under their burden of snow. The sky is dark green-blue ; there is no moon, but the stars shine brightly.*

SILVIO *is driving the sleigh, and DAMARIS is*

SILVIO AND DAMARIS

*seated by his side, only recognisable by her eyes,
which peep out of the coverings like periwinkles.*

*As they are climbing the hill, SILVIO gives the
galloway,¹ Bessy, her head, and the reins lie
slackly ready between his fingers.*

SILVIO (*sings*) :

O ! girls may smile,
And girls may frown,
But what care I
Or Bessy brown ?

We tramp the fells,
In hail and snow,
By running streams
Where cresses grow.

We rustling pass
Thro' crinkled leaves,
We work together
Among the sheaves.

My oaken holt
I'd liefer sell,
My father's byres
That he loved well,

¹ A stiff pony.

SILVIO AND DAMARIS

Than bargain over
A comrade true,
A friend so leal,
Brown Bess, as you.

*They have reached the edge of the moor, a land
of snow, broken only by stone dykes which
divide the intake from the heather.*

SILVIO :

A shooting star is falling in the West,
(Wish for the luck of him who loves you best !)
It's fallen on the bosom of yon fell :
Listen ! one day its wistful light will dwell
Within the larkspur eyes of some dear maid,
And twinkling sign, " Am I, or not, afraid ? "
Then other stars will wink to her and say,
" Come with us, Sisterling, O ! come and play
At hide-and-seek among the worlds that twirl,
Help capture planets with cloud-ropes of pearl.
With Charles' Mighty Wain plough up the sky,
Hear Venus sing, and Sirius reply ;
Come, sister, leave this land of many troubles,
Come search for where the fount of laughter
bubbles,
Deep in our hearts. It sparkles forth as light,

SILVIO AND DAMARIS

And when we laugh most, mortals say ‘ How bright
The stars are on this memorable night.’ ”

DAMARIS :

How do you know the twinkle’s not a tear ?
Those eyes are brightest which a teardrop bear
And, if stars laugh, why surely they can weep ?

SILVIO :

Maidens and stars were never meant to weep !

DAMARIS (*sighs*) :

O ! Silvio, how little you must know,
Why, even children ken the source of woe !
How inconsolable for weeks was I
Because my ragged Lucibelle did lie
With broken crown. No sufferings more keen
Than that a baby for her doll has seen.

SILVIO :

So, to win pity, I must lay me down
With nose well scratched and a cracked, broken
crown ?

(*Looking at her.*)

For three long miles I’ve driven without kissing,
I knew that there was something I was missing.

DAMARIS :

And just suppose I will not be kissed *now* ?

SILVIO AND DAMARIS

SILVIO (*laughingly*) :

Your pretty independence to avow ?

Darling, consider, why are men's arms strong

If not to take what to them does belong ?

DAMARIS :

Perhaps I'll kiss you when we reach the stile ;

And surely you can wait another mile !

SILVIO :

Your mile might be a dozen. I prefer

To kiss you now. And why should you demur ?

DAMARIS :

Because you have not even asked permission.

SILVIO :

Taking, not asking, is a lover's mission.

He kisses her.

SILVIO (*sings*) :

Fleeter than the flowers

Of the cherry tree,

Sweeter than the roses'

Mid-June revelry,

SILVIO AND DAMARIS

Are the fleet, sweet moments
Spent with Damaris,
When her lips of velvet
Kiss.

*The snow begins to fall softly, forming a
curtain to screen them from the curiosity
of the curlews.*

F. W. MOORMAN¹

A SINGER sings no more. Ah ! we shall miss
The clear, kind voice that sang these ruggéd hills,
And ruggéd folk who live by moors and mills.
Death found him in his daleland loveliness,
Where Skirfare ripples. Little River, weep !
We ill could lose the lover you would keep.
Must you too claim, sweet rival of the sea,
A poet who would bring you Immortality ?
Yet wind-winged Death's intent, insistent call
Came as he would have wished. How rare to die
In the loved arms wherein one longed to lie ;
And within sight the hill, the lichened wall ;
And within earshot swallows twittering,
And plover voices luring to the ling,
Ripple of waters and a laiking wind :
Death ! may you be to each of us as kind.

¹ Professor F. W. Moorman, Professor of English, Leeds University. Author of "Songs of the Ridings," "Plays of the Ridings," etc. He was drowned bathing in the Skirfare.

DOWD WINTERSGILL

WEATHER-BEATEN, and gray and old
Is Buttersike Farm, tho' it lies in a fold
Of the heather hills; its lichened roof
And battered byres look grim and aloof.
The windows have no curtains, no flowers;
The front-door scowls, and the back-door lowers;
A cart-rut joins the narrow byway
Used for carting turnips and hay:
In spite of the byway the place looks lone,
And at dusk when the updale hurricanes moan
It is gloomy and dree.

One day I found
The master of this harsh patch of ground
Standing outside his open door
Gazing and gazing over the moor.
(Eighty years old and bent and thin,
And his livelihood, poor old soul, to win!)
His blue eyes watched the sun over Baal
Throwing a golden shower on the dale,
And the hills were fair as the Promised Land.
"By gow," he muttered, "t' sun is grand!"

DOWD WINTERSGILL

He told me his name,—Dowd Wintersgill ;
He'd lost three sons, John, Adam and Will,
His missus too—the picture of her
Made his old hands shake and his blue eye blur :
“ There's not much left, bud I wud not die
When t' sun is warm ; dosta know that I
Feel as if t' sun wur a trusty mate ? ”
And he gazed and leaned on the paintless gate.

Many an evening I take a walk
To Buttersike Farm, to have a talk
With sun-loving Dowd about rivers that rise
Under the cloudless burning skies ;
Of deserts ; of islands in Southern seas,
Of coral creeks, and of tropical trees :
To talk of the sun makes his blood like wine,
And he mutters, “ Aye ! t' sun's a girt mate o'
mine.”

MATRON

MATRON is more than forty years wise :
A patient brown are her kind shrewd eyes.
She looks like a Yorkshire farmer's daughter,
As though the sun and the wind had caught her.
Her voice is cheerful, her cheeks are rosy,
Her breast to a child is pillowy-cosy,
Women feel that her strong round arms
Could buffet away all pains, all harms.
And anxious men in their hours of pain,
Seeing her near, drowse again.
In no one heart she reigns a rose,
And it must be right, for God best knows.
Yet, oh ! what sons she might have borne,
Needful to earth as the lusty corn,
Girls with hearts as blithe as the sun,
Full of the beauty of life, and its fun.
Because she has no nest of her own
Her love flows out to the weak and lone,
And it must be right, for God knows best
Where a light should guide and a rose should
rest.

THE ROAD-MENDER

A FRIEND of mine is bent and old,
(A mender of roads on a Yorkshire wold)
His face is brown as the ploughed soil,
The furrows are deep and his hands know toil ;
His corduroy coat is frayed and worn,
And patches show where it has been torn.
At times he nods with a sudden smile,
At times we chat of birds for awhile ;
But he never gossips of folk, for he
Is full of a country-courtesy.
Lessen your speed as you motor by,
For work is long and dust is dry,
Oh ! I shall be sad some too-near day
When my friend's gone forth on the lone Highway.

PARSON

PARSON lives on the moorland's skirt :
His form is frail ; his soul is alert
To things that come from over the hills,
To Dawn's low whistle in daleland ghylls,
To Twilight gleaning reds and golds.
The Dalesfolk say his housekeeper scolds,
For oftentimes when the hills spell rain
He goes without overcoat time and again.
Animals love him ; old wives sigh
As they see him lonesomely passing by ;
" Somehow Sundays are thrang wi' work,
Yet Sunday next we maun go to kirk.
Eh ! bud its hard to mak' oot sermon,
Passon might just as well read it in German,
Yet it mak's him sad to see few folk there,
Ony old Harker to listen his prayer ;
Let's tak' him along yon flitch of ham,
For he doänt look overwell fed, poor lamb ! "
And Parson smiles when the service is done,
" The work in Thy vineyard, dear Lord, has
begun."

RAKE

THERE'S no better dog than Hardcastle's Rake :
Not a hundred guineas would Hardcastle take
For his wall-eyed dog : and Ben is a man
Who takes good money whenever he can !
But Rake's worth more to him than brass,
And Hardcastle loves him more than his lass
Or his bairns : at least so the dalesfolk say :
And his old lass laughs with, "Happen, he
may,

For t' bairns are fed by a sheep-dog's work,
An' Rake is a dog, 'at niver 'ull shirk ;
On a winter's neet he'll snore on t' hearth,
An' at slightest stir in t' fold or t' garth
He's at our Ben's side ; together they 'ull go
Out on t' moor in hail or snow ;
An' some hours later they'll both come in
Tired an' famished, an' dirty as sin ;
When our Ben goes on his last long trudge,
Down t' Valley o' Death, thro' rain an' sludge,
An' gits at last to t' Goolden Gate,
Theer'll be trouble in Heaven if Rake, his mate,

RAKE

Can't pass ; our Ben 'ull rampage an' shout
If ony saint shuts his sheep-dog out,
If Peter refuses to have him ? By gow !
At yon gate theer'll be a hell of a row ! ”

SONG OF THE DAISY-CHAIN

CHORUS :

DANCE the dance of the daisy-chain,
Tread as lightly as silver rain ;
Let's join hands and round again
Merrily over the daisy plain.

FIRST CHILD :

Go on dancing to and fro
And tell me how does the daisy grow ?

SECOND CHILD :

She opens her eyes as soon as the light
Has driven away the dark blue night.

CHORUS :

Dance the dance of the daisy-chain,
Tread as lightly as silver rain ;
Let's join hands and round again
Merrily over the daisy plain.

THIRD CHILD :

She takes her bath in the morning dew,
So all her petals are fresh anew ;

SONG OF THE DAISY-CHAIN

FOURTH CHILD :

She shines, a star in the homely grass,
And twinkles at all the folk who pass.

CHORUS :

Dance the dance of the daisy-chain,
Tread as lightly as silver rain ;
Let's join hands and round again
Merrily over the daisy plain.

FIFTH CHILD :

She waves in the wind to her sister flowers,
And happily lives her sweet Spring hours.

SIXTH CHILD :

At eve she hides her pink-tipp'd face,
And goes to sleep with a lovely grace.

Dance the dance of the daisy-chain,
Tread as lightly as silver rain ;
Let's join hands and round again
Merrily over the daisy plain.

THE FIRST BABY

SAW you the childling daisies
Peeping in the grass ?
Their golden eyes are watching
To see my baby pass.

Saw you the purple heartease
From greenery arise ?
They wait to waft their fragrance
Into my baby's eyes.

Saw you the wild rose bushes
How low they bend ? They seek
To spill their rosy colour
Upon my baby's cheek.

Saw you the woodland lilies
Around the silver bole ?
They come to greet the purity
That's in my baby's soul.

MY LITTLE GIRL

(Where is *your* little girl? A question from a five-years-old.)

My little girl is away on the hills,
The daisy-silvered hills,
Where the trees are bird-beautiful all day long,
Sweetly she carols the Daisy-song
That is full of pink-tipped trills.

All day in the buttercup fields she walks,
In sun-bathed fields she walks,
Buttercups teach her the buttercup play,
She croons and carols the buttercup lay
As she tiptoes among their stalks.

She wears a delicate wild-rose smock,
A dew-embroidered smock,
Thistledown haloes her dim little face,
Her petticoats are of thistledown lace,
Of thistledown silk, each sock.

She sleeps in a cradle cave of the moon,
Rocked by the Man in the Moon,
O ! my little girl is a princess, supreme,
She reigns in a dimly-remembered dream
Where Time has lost his shoon.

THE SCHOONER

A TALL five-masted schooner
Has come into the bay,
A lovelier sight we have not seen
For many a summer's day :
She rests in tranquil beauty,
While a crowd of little craft
Like children playing hide-and-seek,
Are bobbing fore and aft.
And in the morning sunlight
So beautiful is she,
We nursery people call her
“ *The Mother of the Sea.*”

NURSERY RHYME

I

Peaseblossom, Peaseblossom, where have you been?

“Almost all of the world I’ve seen :

To the dimsey wood I found a path,

Where Puck was planting a cowslip rath,

Cobweb was linking the cowslips up,

With gossamer ribbons from cup to cup,

Then Ariel came and the dogs did bark,

While the little hills rocked in the rock-a-bye
dark.”

TWENTY YEARS LATER

Peaseblossom, Peaseblossom, where have you been?

“A tiny piece of the world I’ve seen :

A beautiful country of hills and dales,

That will not vanish with fairy tales—

A land of homes and of hearty fare,

Where the folk are kind and keen is the air,

Where childer ‘hullo’ and Love is a guest,

And Dawn brings Joy and Dusk brings Rest.”

THE RAINBOW

WHEN I was six
I asked the reason
Rainbows came
In the rainy season.

A little later,
When I was seven,
I was told their arch
Bridged Earth and Heaven.

And when I reached
The age of eight,
I found each bow
Had a paler mate.

At nine I asked
Where the rainbows dwell
Before they dance
Over dale and fell ?

And now that I
In the world may roam,
I've followed the rainbow
To its home.

THE RAINBOW

Where the tumbling waters
Of Foyer ¹ brawl,
And the songbirds
Hold high carnival :

Where rocks are steep,
And shy ferns hide,
That's where the rainbows
Ever abide.

Whenever the sun
Salutes the fall,
To a bow in hiding
Sun-fays call :

And one leaps out
To the flying mist,
And lingers awhile
And is sun-kissed ;

Then darts away
While her sisters peek—
And thus they play
At hide-and-seek.

¹ Falls of Foyer.

SONGS OF THE SEASONS

JANUARY

THE bullfinch's breast is a browny-rose,
(O ! but the Spring is a-lurking near !)
And madder-tipped now is the birch in the Close,
The gorse is waving a golden banner,
A snowdrop peeps in the bonniest manner.

A linnet is perched on the sun-lit gate
(O ! but the Spring is a-lurking near !)
The rooks are holding a loud debate,
And young lives stir in the waiting mould,
There's promise of primrose and marigold.

A blackbird has come with a yellowing beak,
(O ! but the Spring is a-lurking near !)
Sweetheart ! he is playing at hide-and-seek
With the Mate of his dreams ; and just as we do,
He ardently yearns for the long days too.

SONGS OF THE SEASONS

FEBRUARY

TO-DAY I saw the catkins blow,
Altho' the hills are white with snow ;
While throstles sang, " The sun is good,"
They waved their banners in the wood.
They come to greet the lurking Spring
As messengers from Winter's King.
And thus they wave while Winter reigns,
While his cold grip still holds the plains.
Oh, tho' the hills are white with snow,
To-day I saw the catkins blow !

APRIL

(My Birthday)

CERTES, the world's a pleasing place !
I've seen again my sister's face ;
I saw her playing hide-and-seek
Around the trees where squirrels peek,
Where rabbits scamper up the creek.
I heard her laughter in the rill,
My loving sister Averil !

SONGS OF THE SEASONS

When first her sweetness came to earth
A star was born of lyric mirth,
It blew a kiss to me at birth.

No wonder then
My heart is singing to my pen,
When the slow year revolves and leads
My sister Averil, who pleads
That I should hasten to help her
Teach the lazy trees to purr.
Let's veil in leafage every bole
Sweet Averil, my sister-soul !

SONG OF THE WHIN

THE moor road is yellow with the flowering of
the whin,
And heights of blue are shaken with the rapture
of the lark,
All the world is loving, and little lives begin,
The merry birds are calling from cock-light until
dark.

“ *Tirilee ! tirilee !*

Are you hiding, Sweet ?

What is life, what is love ?

What is life, what is love ?

Fleet, fleet, fleet, fleet.”

SONGS OF THE SEASONS

Flaming golden uplands where the bumble bees are
humming,
Each blossom's hoard protected by a dark green
javelin ;
Some weeks ago a herald bud showed kissing time
was coming,
It is writ on lovers' calends by the flowering of
the whin.

“ *Tirilee ! tirilee !*
Come and kiss, Sweet !
Live and love,
Live and love,
Life is fleet, fleet, fleet.”

AUTUMN SONG

HEIGHO ! for the Autumn sun and mist,
For the fire of the beeches' glow,
For the winds that whirl wherever they list,
And the song of the seasons know.
Oh ! the lilt of the burnie was *lura-vure—See-how-*
my-waters-flow !

Heigho ! for the lover who stepped with me
On the beech leaves russet-red ;

SONGS OF THE SEASONS

The shining fields of Heaven saw we
Up by the green dale-head.
And the lilt of the burnie was *lura-vure—I'll-flow-*
when-you-both-are-dead!

THE SPENDTHRIFT

O! WIND, you are a spendthrift
To scatter so much gold;
You've squandered all my savings
Amassed from wood and wold.

The garnets of the rowan,
The copper of the beech,
The amber of the maple
Are now beyond my reach.

You crept into the valley
With silent, slinking stealth,
And then with wild extravagance
You wasted all my wealth.

On finding so much treasure
You raised your voice in glee,
And now no leaf remaineth
Upon each naked tree.

SONGS OF THE SEASONS

O ! Wind, my spendthrift playmate,
 'Twas wrong to take my gold,
For now my lovely valley
 Is very bare and cold.

THE FALL OF THE YEAR

I HEAR the year departing,
 Say Cleopatra-like,
“ Go ! Charmian-October
 And search by wood and dyke,

A cloak of royal crimson,
 A maple-tinted veil :
And, sighing, men shall whisper,
 A queen dies fair and frail !

Go ! Bring my beryl-tinted
 Petticoat of leaves,
And bind my brow with creepers
 Vermilion from the eaves.

Then, all a blaze of beauty,
 I'll draw my last cold breath,
And, sighing, men will whisper,
 ‘ How beautiful is Death.’ ”

SONGS OF THE SEASONS

NOVEMBER

HERE is the month of piney-logs,

Hey ! for a cheery fire, O !

Heads on paws lie the drowsy dogs,

And shadows climb like dusky forms

And dance to the roar of the outside storms.

O ! a book is good, or a comrade's letter,

But a dream of the coming April's better,

Hey ! for a cheery fire, O !

Outside, the wind in the forest roars,

Hey ! for a cheery fire, O !

He's finding the quickest route to the moors ;

The cowls are spinning on chimneys high,

Twirling under the twinkling sky ;

And witches ride to-night on the gale,

Galloping, galloping, down the dale,

Hey ! for a cheery fire, O !

OLD HOME

WARM hospitable eaves the swallows know !
Wide lawns, where dandelions dare not show !
Here every June the fledglings learn to sing,
Learn how to flutter down on dubious wing
From lilac to laburnum : fleet amazement
Shows in their peering glances thro' the casement ;
They never thought when staring at the eaves
To play among such pleasantry of leaves,
To know such glory, wondrous green and blue,
A land of little Summer, sweet with dew !
Thence peeping, by some apple-burdened tree,
My Mother, near the orchard, they may see,
Waist-deep in lupins and in lavender,
She cuts them gently so she may not stir
The butterfly that nestles on her fingers,
Thinking upon a wind-loved flower he lingers !
And from the pergola's low arching bowers
My Father watches her—his flower of flowers :
His journal falls unheeded on the grass,
Pied wagtails over books and letters pass,

OLD HOME

Then, by and by, a bell rings cheerily,
And Mother calls, "Come! Daddy, time for
tea."

And arm in arm they enter. (Tranquil place
Where days are full of tenderness and grace.)

YOUR HEAVEN SHALL BE A GARDEN

(To R. E. C.)

YOUR Heaven shall be a garden
Where silver-singing streams
Go carolling thro' woodlands
Below the Fell of Dreams.
A loggia of roses
Shall overlook the lawn,
And seem in fleeting beauty
A dawn against the dawn.
Thro' honeysuckle portals
You'll see each sunseting,
And from your couch of daisies
The merry rollicking
Of distant baby nebulæ—
Perhaps some falling stars
May tumble thro' the roses
And honeysuckle bars !
A pathway edged with lilies
Shall lead towards the North,
Their silver trumpets heralding
Your daily going forth.

YOUR HEAVEN SHALL BE A GARDEN

A pathway fringed with poppies,
Which Night will slowly drown,
Shall murmur to each other
Of your daily lying down.
And you shall have a lakelet,
Where snowy-plumaged cranes
Shall stand like ivory statues
Beneath the crystal rains ;
And you shall have an apiary
With six gold hives, or seven—
You would not love a garden
Without workers in your Heaven !
A flock of fantail pigeons
To nestle at your neck,
And nervous little water-hens
To scurry up the beck ;
And every kind of singer :
Thrushes and tommy-tits,
But specially the ouzel,
The robins and peewits.
Your Heaven shall be a garden
Where silver-singing streams
Go carolling thro' woodlands,
Below the Fell of Dreams.

TWO WISHES

I

If ever the chance were given to me
To choose what I would wish to be,
More than a seaman, more than a queen
Of the loveliest land that mortals have seen,
More than the world's most wonderful singer
I would wish to be a happiness-bringer.

II

May I never roam in a wood where there leaps no
trill of a bird :
May I never live in a house where the laugh of a
child is not heard.

REMEMBRANCE DAY IN THE DALES

It's a fine kind thought ! And yet—I know
The Abbey's not where our Jack should lie,
With his sturdy love of a rolling sky ;

As a tiny child

He loved a sea that was grand and wild.

God knows best !

Near-by the sea our Jack should rest.

And Willie—Willie our youngest born—

I fear that he might be lonesome, laid

Where the echoing, deep-voiced prayers are said,—

And yet the deep-voiced praying words

Reach God's heart too with the hymns of the birds.

In His keep

On the edge of a wood our Will should sleep.

God knows best !

But the years are long since the lads went west.

LITANY OF THE CAGED SONG BIRDS

ONCE I swung in Heaven blue,
Once was cradled by the trees,
Once I knew the bending branch
Touched the pinions of the breeze.
Little Saint of singing things,
Francis ! hear my flutterings,
Hear the breaking heart of me.

Mortals think I sing of joy,
Canticles of dewy light,
Roulades of the briared dell,
Of the runnel's fresh delight.
Little Saint of singing things,
Francis ! hear my flutterings,
Hear the breaking heart of me.

Lone I sing encaged in wire,
But my spirit's on the thorn
Of the dancing moon-white may,
Near the nest where I was born.

LITANY OF THE CAGED SONG BIRDS

Little Saint of singing things,
Francis ! hear my flutterings,
For the loving sake of Him
Who was crownèd with a thorn,
Who once died upon a tree,
Hear the breaking heart of me.

PIRATES OF HEAVEN

DOWN in a creek of the heavenly sea
The heavenly babes play at piracy,
Sweet dimpled pirates crawl on the sand,
Waiting for mothers as contraband.
And the only mothers who may come in,
And the favour of heavenly pirates win,
Are the childless mothers, who missed the mirth
Of a child of their own upon the earth.

LOSS

LITTLE Mother ! of the Son
Who belongs to everyone,

Did you sorrow when His rest
Was no longer on your breast ?

Did you feel like weeping, Doy,¹
When He ceased to be a boy ?

Mothers understand your loss ;
Such is every mother's cross.

¹ Dale diminutive for darling.

CHRISTMAS NIGHT

HOBBS ¹ and elfins want to see
The Christ-Child lying on Joseph's knee.
They troop to the stable, Christmas night,
Each with a lantern's prick of light.
Thro' chinks in roof and door they peep,
Whist ! Little May is longing to sleep.
Like drifted leaves they heap by the door,
And tumble in on the hay-strewn floor,
They perch on the manger ; one bold elf
'Neath Mary's fingers cuddles himself.
And one on the backs of the drowsy cattle
Is hopping about with a starbeam rattle.
The little Christ-baby crows with glee,
Cheery as only a babe can be :
Brownies tickle His curly toes
And whisper Him secrets no mother knows,
While Joseph croons, " Thy Mother is weary,
Why art thou wakeful, sweet little dearie ;
How the wind wuthers ! Sleep, pretty Doy,
Hushaby ! Hushaby ! dear little joy."

¹ Yorkshire brownies.

CHILDREN'S NOMINEY

COTTAGE ! House, and country Hall !
A Merry Christmas to you all !
Long ago on Christmas Day
A child was cradled in the hay,
Where the ox, and where the ass
Watched the little Mother lass.
And they whispered in His ear
How the beasts know winter-fear ;
How the birdies die of cold
When the snow is on the wold.
Children of this household ! give
Crumbs, so that His birds may live.

THE CHANGELING

ON Sunday, while I watched the folk
Come out of kirk, I heard
A baby-wind a-trying to sing
The song of a little bird.

ON Monday, after the childer left
Me, lone in a nettle ditch
A little rowan brushed my coat,
She was a little witch.

ON Tuesday night a fisherman
Forgot his wicker creel,
And I let out a string of stars,—
A slippery, shining eel.

ON Wednesday, while my mother washed,
I tried with might and main
To tie the little cockerel
On to the weather vane.

ON Thursday, while my father set
The traps, a rainbow crept
Into the loft, I locked it in
And listened while it slept.

THE CHANGELING

On Friday, folks said Northern Lights
Were seen by Catch 'em Cover,
But I saw girls with coloured scarves
Each dancing with a lover.

On Saturday, my thinking day,
I thought and thought until
If only all my thoughts were flowers
A big field they would fill.

REQUIEM

LET the daisies grow as they will,
Purple crocus and daffodil ;
Near by plant a fragrant lime,
So a thrush may stay in the evening time.
Bring the children to pick the flowers,
And tell them between the April showers,
“ *Here lies a lover of rain and sun,
Loving, and loved by everyone ;
Who left these beautiful dales to find
The dales where the heavenly rivers wind.*”

GOD OF DREAMS

ONLY the uplands of delicate breath
Divide the Valleys of Life and Death :

Maybe the Valley of Death is fair,
But the Dale of Life is our native air.

Life, it is sweet as the lamps of home,
Yet every creature once must roam

Over the intake,¹ over the streams
To find at last the God of their dreams :

And they who seek for a God in state
Will find the One whom their souls await,

Sat on a throne that is curtained by blue,
Jewelled with stars, enamelled with dew :

And those who seek for a winsomer grace,
Will find Him mirrored in every face

Of every wild flower turned to the sun ;
For God is the dream of everyone.

¹ Intake=land reclaimed from the moors.



